

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD
GRAZING LAND MECHANICAL TREATMENT
(Acre)
CODE 548**

DEFINITION

Modifying physical soil and/or plant conditions with mechanical tools by treatments such as pitting contour furrowing, and ripping or sub-soiling.

PURPOSES

This practice should be applied as part of a conservation management system to support one or more of the following purposes:

Fracture compacted soil layers and improve soil permeability and aeration.

Reduce water runoff and increase infiltration reducing erosion and protecting lower lying land or structures from siltation.

Break up sod bound conditions and thatch to increase plant vigor.

Renovate and stimulate plant community for increased ground cover, productivity and yield.

CONDITIONS WHERE THIS PRACTICE APPLIES

This standard may be applied on pastureland, rangeland, grazed forest, and native pastures.

On soils and slope that are suitable for each method and type of equipment used.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable For All The Purposes Stated Above.

Mechanical treatments such as contour furrowing, pitting, ripping or subsoiling shall be designed and applied in a manner to accomplish the desired objectives and address the natural resource concerns. These treatments shall be limited to soils and slopes where surface disturbances will not result in unacceptable levels of soil erosion and/or sedimentation.

Areas to be treated shall be relatively free of undesirable or noxious plants that are likely

to increase because of surface disturbance.

If natural plant community is desired, desirable forage species shall be of sufficient quantity and have a distribution pattern that allows the plants to take advantage of the improved moisture and to spread into disturbed areas.

Adequate rest from grazing shall be applied to ensure desired plant responses from this treatment. See practice standard 528a - Prescribed Grazing.

CONSIDERATIONS

Range Planting and Pasture and Hay Planting may be used in conjunction with Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment.

Mechanical treatment may not be desirable on areas to be used for recreation due to enhanced surface roughness of the site.

All treatments should be planned on the contour when conditions warrant.

The effects of mechanical treatment on the trafficability of the area to be treated should be realized by the producer.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for installation of Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment shall be prepared for each site or planning unit according to the standard criteria and NM specifications. Specifications shall be recorded using specification sheets, job sheets, narrative statements in conservation plans, or other acceptable documents. See Conservation Practice Job Sheet 548 Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Implementation of a good prescribed grazing plan will assist in the long-term operation and maintenance of this practice. If the desired effects of this practice is lost over time, the practice may need to be repeated.

Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resource Conservation Service.